FWIS 118
Fall 2016
Prof. David Ferris

FWIS 118
MUSIC, MYTH, AND MADNESS:
STUDIES IN MUSICAL BIOGRAPHY

Biographical narratives about musicians typically borrow from mythology and literature and treat their subjects as creative heroes who defy societal conventions and devote themselves wholly to their art. In this seminar we will study memoirs, scholarly biographies, novels, and films that are concerned with a wide range of musicans, including J. S. Bach, Bob Dylan, Thelonius Monk, Mozart, and Robert and Clara Schumann. We will focus on the themes of genius, creative inspiration, and madness and on the literary and cinematic techniques that biographers use to bring their subjects to life. Students will also be introduced to the music of these composers and performers, but no musical background is necessary.

As part of the Program in Writing and Communication, this First-year Writing Intensive Seminar will also focus on teaching students to improve their writing and communication skills, and thus to become better readers, thinkers, and learners. Specifically, the goals are for students to:

1. Enhance their understanding of the central place of writing and communication in the learning process and in academic life.
2. Learn strategies for analyzing, synthesizing, and responding to college-level readings.
3. Improve their ability to communicate correctly and effectively in writing and in speech, taking into account audience and purpose.
4. Become comfortable with writing as a process, and learn strategies—such as prewriting, outlining, and revision—for working through that process
5. Learn how to use the work of others in an appropriate manner, and where necessary, how to cite that work correctly.
6. Learn to articulate oral arguments and to respond productively to arguments of others in discussion.

ASSIGNMENTS

Formal Assignments

There will be 4 formal writing assignments over the course of the semester, ranging in length from 500 to 1000 words. The first 3 assignments will include a mandatory revision, which will be due approximately 2 weeks after the first version.

Assignments will be posted and submitted on Canvas. They must be submitted by midnight on the day they are due.

Informal Assignments

There will also be informal writing assignments throughout the semester, which will be done both inside and outside of class. These assignments will not be graded, but they are required. Students will sometimes be randomly selected to present their assignments to the class.

Oral Presentations

Students will take turns giving oral presentations about the readings, lasting approximately 5 minutes each. These will consist of summarizing the author's argument or theme, answering specific questions that will be handed out in the previous class, and formulating your own questions for your classmates. The presentations are intended as prompts for class discussion. All students should be prepared to answer and comment on the assigned questions for each class.

There are no exams in this course.

ATTENDANCE

Because class discussion is a significant aspect of this course, it is expected that students will attend every class meeting. Students should speak with me if they need to miss a class for a legitimate reason, such as a verifiable illness or injury that requires medical attention.

GRADING

For the first 3 assignments the first version will be worth 2/3 of the grade and the revision will be worth 1/3. Each of the formal writing assignments will be worth 1/5 of the course grade. The remaining 1/5 of the course grade will be based on attendance, participation, oral presentations, and successful completion of the ungraded assignments.

Assignments will be graded on a 4-point scale–from 1.0 (D) to 4.0 (A).

If students foresee a problem handing in an assignment on time, they should request an extension before the assignment is due. If no extension has been granted, late assignments will be accepted only at my discretion, and may result in a lower grade.

HONOR CODE

One of the purposes of FWIS is to help new students understand the Rice Honor Code and, more explicitly, to teach students the rules of paraphrasing and scholarly attribution, and the appropriate uses of different types of evidence. Accordingly, FWIS instructors will take an educational approach to transgressions of these rules and respond to errors in these areas foremost as issues for grading and opportunities to correct errors, rather than as instances of academic dishonesty. At the same time, all FWIS instructors retain the authority to treat instances of repeat or egregious violations as matters for the attention of the Rice Honor Council.

In this course, students are expected to do the actual writing of their assignments on their own, with no outside help from anyone else. However, students are strongly encouraged to collaborate on all other aspects of their coursework; including discussing assignments, reading each other’s work, and making suggestions for editing and revision.

TEXTS

Students are required to purchase 3 books for this course:

Gerald Graff and Cathy Birkenstein. *They Say/I Say: The Moves That Matter in Academic Writing*. Third edition. New York: Norton & Company, 2014.
Ernst Kris and Otto Kurz. *Legend, Myth, and Magic in the Image of the Artist*. (1934) Translated by Alastair Laing. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979.
E. T. A. Hoffmann. *The Life and Opinions of the Tomcat Murr*. (1820, 1822) Translated by Anthea Bell. London: Penguin Books, 1999.

Please be sure to buy the third edition of *They Say/I Say* and the Penguin edition of *Tomcat Murr*. All other readings will be available on Canvas. Students should bring assigned readings to class each week. You may bring your reading on an electronic device such as a tablet or laptop, but you may not use the device for any other purpose during class.

Films will be screened in class, and will also be available for streaming on Canvas. Due to the lengths of the films, class will be extended on the following days: September 15, October 4, and November 22.

SYLLABUS

BOB DYLAN
August 25
Bob Dylan. "The Lost Land." In *Chronicles: Volume One*, 25-104. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2004.
August 30
Gerald Graff and Cathy Birkenstein. "Introduction" and "I take your point." In *They Say/I Say: The Moves That Matter in Academic Writing*, third edition, 1–14 and 163–6. New York: Norton & Company, 2014.
September 1
Ernst Kris and Otto Kurz. "Introduction" and "The Heroization of the Artist in Biography." In *Legend, Myth, and Magic in the Image of the Artist*, translated by Alastair Laing, 1-60. (1934) New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979.

JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH
September 6
Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach with Johann Friedrich Agricola. “The World-Famous Organist, Mr. Johann Sebastian Bach, Royal Polish and Electoral Saxon Court Composer, and Music Director in Leipzig.” (1754) In *The New Bach Reader*, edited by Hans T. David and Arthur Mendel, revised and expanded by Christoph Wolff, 295-307. New York: W. W. Norton, 1998.
Graff and Birkenstein. Part 1. In *They Say/I Say,* 19–50.

FRIDAY SEPTEMBER 9: ESSAY 1

September 13
Kris and Kurz. "The Special Position of the Artist in Biography." In *Legend, Myth, and Magic in the Image of the Artist,* 91-132.

MARIN MARAIS
September 15 (Class will begin at 12:15)
FILM: Alain Corneau. *Tous les Matins du Monde*. France, 1991.
September 22
Graff and Birkenstein. "He ~~says~~ contends." In *They Say/I Say,* 139–59.

FRIDAY SEPTEMBER 23: ESSAY 1, REVISION

THELONIOUS MONK
September 27
Nat Hentoff. "Three Ways of Making It" (excerpt). In *The Jazz Life*, 178–203. London: Peter Davies, 1961.
Krin Gabbard. "Evidence: Monk as Documentary Subject." *Black Music Research Journal* 19 1999: 207-225.
October 4 (Class will begin at 12:45)
FILM: Charlotte Zwerin. *Thelonious Monk: Straight No Chaser*. United States, 1988.
October 6
Graff and Birkenstein. Chapters 4–6. In *They Say/I Say,* 55–90.

FRIDAY OCTOBER 7, 8:00 PM: FIELD TRIP TO THE WORTHAM THEATER
Jason Moran—"In My Mind: Monk at Town Hall, 1959"

SATURDAY OCTOBER 8: ESSAY 2

JOHANNES KREISLER
October 18
E. T. A. Hoffmann. *The Life and Opinions of the Tomcat Murr*. (1820, 1822) Translated by Anthea Bell. London: Penguin Books, 1999.
October 20
Graff and Birkenstein. "On closer examination." In *They Say/I Say,* 184–201.

FRIDAY OCTOBER 21: ESSAY 2, REVISION

WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART
October 27
Leopold, Anna Maria, and Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. Excerpts from *A Life in Letters*. Edited by Cliff Eisen and translated by Stewart Spencer. London: Penguin Books, 2006.
_____. Excerpts from *The Letters of Mozart and His Family*. Edited and translated by Emily Anderson. Third edition. London: Macmillan, 1985.
November 1
Otto Jahn. "Mannheim." In *Life of Mozart,* translated by Pauline Townsend, 368-431. New York: 1891, reprinted 1970.

November 8
Maynard Solomon. "A Fool's Errand," and "Mozart in Love." In *Mozart: A Life*, 137-76. New York: HarperCollins, 1995.

FRIDAY NOVEMBER 11: ESSAY 3

CLARA SCHUMANN
November 15
Janice Galloway. "Helft mir (Help me)." In *Clara*, 193–246. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2002.
November 17
Nancy Reich. "The Marriage." In *Clara Schumann: The Artist and the Woman,* revised edition, 80–99. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001.
November 22 (Class will begin at 12:15)
FILM: Clarence Brown. *Song of Love*. United States, 1947.
November 29
Michelle Elizabeth Yael Braunschweig. "'Träumerei' and Family Values." In "Biographical Listening: Intimacy, Madness and the Music of Robert Schumann," 52–68. PhD diss., UC Berkeley, 2013.

WEDNESDAY NOVEMBER 30: ESSAY 3, REVISION

December 1
Graff and Birkenstein: Chapters 8–10. In *They Say/I Say*, 105–37.

WEDNESDAY DECEMBER 7: ESSAY 4

OFFICE HOURS

Email: ferris@rice.edu
Phone: 2191
Office: Room 1205 in Alice Pratt Brown Hall

I am available for office hours by appointment.

Any student with a documented disability seeking academic adjustments or accommodations is requested to speak with me during the first two weeks of class. All such discussions will remain as confidential as possible. Students with disabilities will need to also contact Disability Support Services in the Allen Center.

This syllabus is subject to change.